

OPENING STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE VERNON J. EHLERS
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, TECHNOLOGY AND STANDARDS
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Hearing on EPA's FY 2007 Science and Technology Budget Proposal
Thursday, March 16, 2006
10:00 a.m. to Noon.
2318 Rayburn House Office Building

Good Morning. Welcome to today's hearing on the Environmental Protection Agency's fiscal year 2007 Science and Technology budget.

At the outset of the hearing, I would like to recognize Dr. George Gray, EPA's Assistant Administrator for Research and Development, who is making his first appearance before this Subcommittee. Welcome!

I had the opportunity to meet briefly with Dr. Gray several months ago, and I was very pleased to learn about his interest and expertise in the subject of risk assessment. I am looking forward to learning more about what you are doing to improve risk assessment at the agency.

Every year at our EPA Science budget hearing, I have pointed out the importance of science and technology at EPA. And, who could disagree. EPA's Office of Research and Development has been at the forefront of every one of the agency's major regulatory actions. It conducts the research on what we know about the health and ecological effects of mercury and other contaminants. It prepares the scientific underpinnings of all of the Agency's clean air rules on particulate matter and ozone. It has helped develop and commercialize better environmental

technologies to clean up hazardous wastes. And, it is always looking for the next scientific advance or revolution that may help us better understand the environment or threats to it, and how to counter those threats.

That is why I come to this hearing very concerned about what I see happening to EPA's science budget. The 6 percent proposed reduction in the ORD's budget for fiscal year 2007 is troubling, but not as much as the trend in the budget over the last few years – which would be down 14 percent since 2004. This trend, together with the rapid growth in spending on homeland security research, which alone accounts for almost 12 percent of the science budget, seems to be making it harder for ORD to continue producing the valuable scientific knowledge I just mentioned. I say all of this mindful of the significant constraints we face in the discretionary budget. But just as we can't afford to spend too much, we can't afford to spend too little.

EPA's Science Advisory Board takes a close look at the EPA's science budget every year, and has in the past sounded the alarm bells when it thought it was necessary. I am looking forward to the Board's thoughts on the current budget request.

Finally, I am interested in learning more about how the budget treats particular areas of research, such as nanotechnology, ecological research, university grants and fellowships, green chemistry and climate change.

We have an excellent panel of witness today and I expect that we will learn a great deal. I look forward to your testimony.